

## Walk 4: Brathay to Langdale

A challenging walk up to Loughrigg Fell and back along the river.

**Difficulty: Hard**

**8.8 miles**

**1550 ft altitude gain**

**4-5 hrs**

This walk has it all: an inspiring pull up on to Todd Crag, fellside views of Windermere and Langdale, and a gentle stroll back down along the River Brathay. You will even find yourself wandering through an arboretum and picnicking next to the dreamy Loughrigg Tarn.

If you prefer, you can find refreshments at [Wainwrights' Inn](#) in Chapel Stile, or towards the end of your walk, you can stop off at the

excellent [Chesters by the River](#) café at Skelwith Bridge.

You will find yourself up on the fells where the ground is uneven and often wet. You should wear tough footwear and carry waterproofs.

There are numerous paths and tracks on Loughrigg Fell and it is easy to get confused, so you will certainly be needing your map and compass on this one.



Every effort has been made to achieve accuracy of information in this guide. The authors, publishers and website owners can take no responsibility for loss or injury (including fatal) to persons, loss or damage to property or equipment, trespass, irresponsible behaviour or any other mishap that may be suffered as a result of following the route descriptions or advice offered in this guide. The inclusion of a track or path as part of the route, or otherwise recommended, in this guide does not guarantee that the track or path will remain a right-of-way. If conflict with landowners arises, we advise that you act politely and leave by the shortest route available. If the matter needs to be taken further, then please take it up with the relevant authority.

## The Walk:

You will find parking space at a layby at the corner where the B5286 meets Bog Lane.

### Meditation 1: At Brathay Church

A prayer to start the walk:

Creator Spirit, who broodest everlastingly over the lands and waters of earth, enduring them with forms and colours which no human skill can copy, give me today, I beseech you, the mind and heart to rejoice in thy creation.



1. After visiting the [Holy Trinity Church, Brathay](#) (the church may not be open), walk back down to Bog Lane and turn right and then immediately left to cross the footbridge over the river. Go left on the road (A593), round the corner and across the road. Pass the entrance to a house and take the second entrance to find the footpath through Fishgarths Wood. The path takes you left through a gate and up into the woods. At a junction, go right through a gate and then bear left on the upper path which climbs steeply up the hill. Avoid a left turn near the top that would go through a gap in a wall. Go straight on up and you'll find the views from Todd Crag at the top are spectacular.

## **Meditation 2: At Todd Crag**

If the weather is conducive, stop a while and drink in the view.

The Scottish Gaelic language has a phrase 'Are you going to church?' which when literally translated says, 'Are you going to the stones?' Well, here is your church for this moment, among these stones on this mountain.

Stand or sit in this cathedral of creation, this house of prayer without walls, with the sacraments of God's creation laid out below you, the incarnational nature of the world in all its glory.

Listen to the music being played: birds and insects, the movement of air in the grass or between the rocks, God sounding throughout the universe.

Your breathing may still be heavy from the exertion of reaching this place. Breathe in and out and be conscious that you are breathing in and out the presence of God. That is true prayer. This breath fills the lungs to give energy for the next part of the walk and it is also the breath of the universe.

### **Reading:**

*O come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation.*

*Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving  
and be glad in him with psalms.*

*For the Lord is a great God  
and a great king above all gods.*

*In his hand are the depths of the earth  
and the heights of the mountains are his also.*

*The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands have moulded the dry land.*

*Come, let us worship and bow down  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

*For he is our God;  
we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand (Psalm 95:1-7)*

### **A Prayer:**

*Spirit of the wind, breathe down over these valleys,*

*Spirit of the air, breathe in our blood,*

*Spirit of the water, cleanse our eyes,*

*Spirit of the earth, warm our feet,*

*Spirit of fire, penetrate our hearts,*

*Spirit of fire, enter our minds,*

*Spirit of fire, strengthen our seeing,*

*that we may walk in truth on your living ground.*

2. Set off again and avoid a rocky summit by a path on the left. Then take a left turn which will soon bring you to a small pond. Climb steeply up the path in front of you, over the hill and see another slightly larger tarn. The path goes past it on the right-hand side. Continue fairly straight in a westerly direction.

3. After a while, the path meets and follows a wall. Keeping the same wall on your left, go through a gate in front of you and then take the left fork which will return to the wall. The path skirts around the southern side of the hill and brings you round to cross a stream (try not to get your feet wet). After a short ascent you will meet a bridleway at which you should turn left. The path descends towards the valley, staying close to the wall. At last you come through a gate in front of you and onto a lane between fields.



4. Take the second gate on the right and follow the path through two fields. Go through the gate and onto a lane where you should turn right. Loughrigg Tarn on the left would be a perfect picnic spot. Follow the lane round until you reach the road. Turn right and quite soon go left through the [National Trust High Close Arboretum](#). Stay on the main path which bends round to the right, past the youth hostel to meet the road.

5. When you get to the road, turn left and cross the cattle grid. Before you reach the village of Elterwater, turn right towards Chapel Stile following a sign to Dungeon Ghyll. Walk into the village until you see the [church](#) in front of you.

### **Meditation 3: In Langdale Church**

There are many different tried and tested ways of praying, but while visiting this place set aside for prayer, you might like to take this opportunity to try praying with a single sentence.

Sit with both feet on the ground, the back straight, the head level, hands in the lap.

Deliberately relax the body, bit by bit, letting go from feet and legs, back and shoulders, arms and hands, neck, eyes and face; breathing more deeply than usual and relaxing as you breathe out.

Be still and remember that God is with you.

Offer your prayer time to God, in these or other words of praise and thanksgiving:

**O God of peace,  
who taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved,  
in quietness and confidence shall be our strength:  
by the might of your Spirit  
lift us, we pray, to your presence,  
where we may be still  
and know that you are God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

John Baille in *The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer*, SPCK 1995, p 27

*Then take a short sentence about God to focus your thoughts. The following might be helpful:*

- **‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10)**
- **‘The Lord is my shepherd: I can lack nothing’ (Psalm 23:1)**
- **‘Those who wait upon God shall renew their strength’ (Isaiah 40:31)**
- **Jesus says: ‘Behold, I am with you always’ (Matthew 28:20)**
- **Jesus says: ‘My peace I give to you’ (John 14:27)**
- **‘The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you’ (2 Thessalonians 3:3)**

*Think about these words briefly. Then stop thinking and simply say the words silently to yourself, repeating them as slowly as you can, giving them a chance to become part of you. When your mind wanders, quietly and patiently come back to the sentence.*

6. Once you have visited the church, come out of the church gate, turn right and then immediately left down the hill. Go left on the road (B5343) past the shop, public toilets and [Wainwrights' Inn](#), then turn right at the blue sign to cross the river. On the other side, turn left to follow the river via the footpath and road, down to Elterwater village.

7. At the village, cross the bridge and turn right through the car park to find the path (marked as the Cumbria Way) that continues along the river. It goes past Elterwater and on down the river. Stay on the same side of the river to go to [Chesters by the River](#) café at Skelwith Bridge for some highly recommended refreshments. From Chesters, cross the bridge; the main road soon bends sharply to the right but you should continue straight ahead on the narrow road indicated by blue sign 'Cycle Route 37 to Ambleside'. After 0.3 mile take the left steeply up to Skelwith Fold. In this tiny hamlet, turn round to admire the wonderful views of Langdale. Finally, turn left again on Bog Lane towards Ambleside, and return to Holy Trinity Church, Brathay.

#### **Meditation 4: A Celtic Blessing to finish the walk**

May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

